

DECLARATION OF SEAN ELLIOTT

I, Sean Elliott, am over 18 years of age and am competent to testify. I declare as follows:

1. I am a resident of Essex, Maryland.
2. I was employed in the mobile phone sales department at a Best Buy in White Marsh from October 2016 until February 28, 2021, when Best Buy laid me off and eliminated my position as part of a national restructuring.
3. I applied for unemployment benefits on March 9, 2021.
4. I noted in my benefits application that Best Buy was providing me severance pay and I completed a fact-finding questionnaire about the severance.
5. On March 10, 2021, MDL approved me for regular unemployment insurance (UI) with a total weekly benefit amount of \$381 and a maximum benefit amount of \$9,906.
6. I received my benefits from March 13, 2021, to April 26, 2021.
7. I received my severance from Best Buy in the form of a direct deposit of \$3,822.53 on April 7, 2021 (this amount represented eight weeks' pay after taxes) and reported this on BEACON.
8. However, in early May 2021 MDL stopped paying my benefits without providing me any notice of any kind.
9. I uploaded onto BEACON the first and last pages of the severance agreement as well as a screenshot of my bank statement showing a direct deposit from "Best buy stores" on April 7.
10. On the "eligibility issues" page, BEACON showed an "adjudication" for "severance pay" as "pending" but I did not know what was being adjudicated or when the adjudication would happen.

11. I had several conversations with MDL representatives in which the representatives assured me that I did everything right and I just had to wait for an adjudicator to resolve my case. They assured me that there was no fraud investigation and the issue was just “validating the severance.”

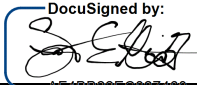
12. Twice, a representative created a “case number” resulting in an email being sent to me indicating that the issue “may take up to 5 to 10 business days” for “feedback or a resolution.” However, I never heard back from anyone at MDL about these case numbers; when I called MDL representatives and provided the case numbers, the representatives said they did not know what I was talking about.

13. In the meantime, I fell behind on rent and my landlord got a court order to evict me and scheduled the eviction with the sheriff; the only reason he did not evict me is that I was finally able to get rental assistance at the last minute, after I had packed up most of my apartment. I had to borrow thousands of dollars from friends and family to cover basic expenses like rent, food, water, electricity, and cell phone bills. Before my benefits got cut for no reason, I used some of the severance money to make monthly payments to a friend towards the purchase of my friend’s used car, but I had to return the car because I could not continue the payments; as a result, I had no transportation and no way of getting from my home in Essex to employment opportunities in the area.

14. Then out of the blue on October 11, 2021, I got a call from someone at MDL who said she was an adjudicator. She said I had submitted everything I needed to submit and had done everything right and was owed more than 20 weeks of benefits. I finally received the benefits on October 18, 2021.

15. MDL's sudden suspension of my benefits for so long caused my mental health to suffer greatly. The experience changed me as a person. I was in a constant state of worry and anxiety. It hurt my relationship with my partner because I felt like I was on edge and more irritable – my mind was constantly racing and I felt like a ball of stress and nerves. It put a strain on other relationships, too, because I had to borrow money from family and friends. For months, I would lie in bed trying to get some rest but I could not stop thinking about how my life was falling apart; sometimes I would not be able to fall asleep until the sun came out. I felt like what I was fighting for was the lifeline that was put in place so people would not have to deal with this.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

DocuSigned by:

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Sean Elliott

11/22/2021
Date